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C O N F I D E N T I A L ACCRA 002410

SIPDIS

FROM AMBASSADOR MARY C. YATES TO A/S CONNIE NEWMAN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/08/2014

TAGS: GH PREL

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT KUFUOR REQUESTS POTUS MEETING

Classified By: Ambassador Mary C. Yates for reasons 1.5 d and e.

¶1. (C) This message has two requests:

A) A request from President Kufuor for a meeting with President Bush, and

B) A request from me for a congratulatory phone call from President Bush or senior USG official to Kufuor on his reelection.

¶2. (C) Ghanaian President John Kufuor specifically asked me December 3 about the possibility of being invited to meet with President Bush in Washington. He was very optimistic about his election chances. On numerous occasions he has closely identified himself, his party, and their elephant symbol with President Bush and the U.S. Republican party. He did not elaborate on the substance or purpose of the proposed meeting. (Comment: The recent White House visits of the two other significant West African presidents, Obasanjo and Wade, undoubtedly influenced this request. End comment.)

¶3. (C) I support such an invitation. On December 10, the Electoral Commission declared President Kufuor the winner, with 52.75 percent of the popular vote (the opposition NDC party has not yet accepted the results). Kufuor has encouraged strong relations with the United States. As head of ECOWAS for the past two years (his term will expire in January 2005) and President of a rare peaceful, prosperous democracy in West Africa, he has played a constructive role in regional peace efforts. Ghana contributes heavily to international peacekeeping efforts, supports our counterterrorism agenda, and has cooperated in a growing military-military relationship. The recently completed national elections were a model for Africa -- generally peaceful, free and fair, with around 80 percent turnout, supported by a vibrant civil society. I believe a meeting with President Bush would send a strong signal of support for democracy and peacebuilding in West Africa.

¶4. (C) In addition to a POTUS meeting, given the impressive election process and our good relations with Ghana, I request that a senior USG official (President Bush, SecState, or NSC Advisor) call President Kufuor and congratulate him on his reelection.

LANIER